

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KABUL 00862 311333Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 DOTE-00 SP-02 L-03
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 AID-05 IGA-02 OMB-01
TRSE-00 DODE-00 COME-00 /051 W
-----100453 312316Z /72

R 310834Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6340
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 0862

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: BEXP, AF
SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT: AFGHAN RAILWAY

REF: 77 KABUL 8730

1. ACCORDING TO UNDP DEPUTY RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE IN KABUL, THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN (GOA) HAS ACCEPTED THE REPORT OF THE FRENCH CONSULTANT, SOFRERAIL, ON THE AFGHAN RAILWAY AND HAS MADE A DECISION TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT WITH "ABSOLUTE TOP PRIORITY." THE UN WAS INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND THE AFGHANS.

2. THE QUESTION MARK REMAINING IS WHETHER THE IRANIANS WILL FOLLOW THROUGH ON THEIR COMMITMENT TO FINANCE THE RAILROAD. THUS FAR, WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ABOUT WHEN AND HOW THE GOA WILL APPROACH THE IRANIANS CONCERNING FUNDING.

3. COMMENT. WE HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS (SHARED SOMEWHAT BY THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR) THAT THE IRANIANS WILL CONSIDER FUNDING ALONE THIS BILLION DOLLAR PLUS PROJECT IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. IF THEY WILL NOT, OR CANNOT, DO SO BNWITH OR WITHOUT OTHER OPEC
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MONIES), THE PROJECT WILL MOST LIKELY HAVE TO BE SHELVED; SINCE NO OTHER PROSPECTIVE DONOR IS PRESENTLY IN SIGHT. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT BE RECEPTIVE TO FINANCING A RAIL LINK BETWEEN HERAT THROUGH TORGHUNDI TO MARWA (IN TURKMANESTAN), BUT THIS WOULD BE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PROJECT FROM THE ONE NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION.
ELIOT

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